

November 28, 2000

Smart Growth INDEX Pilot Project Descriptions

Region 1

Boston, MA

Boston's I-495 Corridor is experiencing rapid residential and high tech commercial growth which in turn is significantly impacting the region's traffic. Through a FY 99 TCSP grant, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (the region's MPO) and a large number of area stakeholders embarked on the "I-495 Technology Corridor Initiative/Campaign for Shared Solutions" project. Desiring to balance economic vitality and community preservation, MAPC will work with residents of the community to compare their goals for the future with a build-out scenario that would be allowed under current zoning practices. The SGI model will be used to depict the impacts of the build-out case and will then be used with community residents to develop alternative visions of transportation investments and land use scenarios.

Burlington-Essex, VT

The Chittenden County MPO is currently planning for an 8-mile transit corridor between Burlington and Essex under FTA's New Starts program. Under this program, participants are required to develop plans for transit-supportive land use that include measures to contain sprawl and supportive zoning regulations. To support this effort, CCMPO will be using SGI to analyze various transit-oriented developments and design scenarios and to provide a much needed quantitative estimate of the effects of these different options.

Region 2

Burlington County, NJ

EPA Region 2, The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and the New Jersey Office of State Planning, will be embarking on a community-driven approach to examine how transit-oriented development scenarios will impact municipalities within the boundaries of the Delaware Estuary Project, along a major transportation corridor. SGI will be used to compare the effects of developing the corridor in an auto-oriented fashion; developing improved transit service without supportive land use changes; and developing the corridor with improved transit and transit oriented developments. This comparative analysis will lead to further investigation of redeveloping abandoned shopping centers based on new-urbanist principles and creating improved linkages to transit for bicyclists, pedestrians and feeder buses.

Region 3

Wilmington, DE

The Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMPACO) and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control will use the Smart Growth INDEX to evaluate the impacts/effects of brownfield redevelopment/infill development at three specific sites in Wilmington. Additionally, WILMAPCO, the region's MPO plans to analyze the effects of the

following growth scenarios projected out to 2020:

- (1) a centered-based growth strategy (infill);
- (2) moderate peripheral growth strategy;
- (3) significant peripheral growth strategy (sprawl);
- (4) any number of variations within these parameters depending on local agency requests.

St. Mary's County, MD

The Southern Maryland region is the fastest growing area in the state. In order to guide growth into priority areas, St. Mary's County has developed a comprehensive plan that seeks to protect sensitive areas and the Chesapeake Bay watershed, diversify economic growth, and reduce resource consumption. SGI will be used to assist the county in assessing the effectiveness of various policies such as density bonuses, agricultural preservation strategies, mixed use planning districts, and infill development which may ultimately be incorporated in the updated comprehensive plan.

Region 4

Wilmington, NC

In 1999, the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County developed a Comprehensive Plan that will be implemented through a "Unified Development Ordinance." The UDO, which is projected to be adopted by December 2000, provides the county with an opportunity to implement various Smart Growth initiatives such as open space preservation and increased housing densities. In tandem with the Wilmington Urban Area MPO, the city and county will use SGI to model alternative land use scenarios to inform the implementation of the UDO and will examine the impacts of an expanded transit network in the region. The project will also involve students at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in the modeling effort.

Charleston, SC

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester region is home to more 500,000 inhabitants and its growth patterns indicate that urbanization is outpacing population growth by a factor of 6 to 1. In response to this challenge, the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG has begun to develop regional strategies and models to link transportation and infrastructure planning to land use planning. SGI will be used to project future growth patterns based on current policies and planned infrastructure improvements and will compare these to alternative investment patterns and development choices, examining the environmental quality and transportation capacity impacts of each scenario. The results from the model will be used to further regional discussions concerning growth patterns.

Gainesville, FL

The City of Gainesville and Alachua County will be working with the University of Florida, Center for Construction and Environment to examine a series of revitalization strategies for the Depot Avenue corridor, located in Gainesville's downtown core. SGI will be used to model locations for a multi-modal transportation hub, an urban rail-trail network, and to examine options for the redevelopment of Depot Avenue and the surrounding commercial and industrial

areas. The use of the SGI will be supportive of EPA Brownfields and Sustainable Development Challenge Grant efforts underway in the corridor.

Region 5

Indianapolis, IN

The City of Indianapolis is engaging in a comprehensive planning process which will use community values and inputs to assist in the mapping of land use recommendations and critical areas. SGI will assist the city with these efforts as it is used to model various growth boundary, open space preservation, infill and alternate density strategies for the city. This pilot will be complemented by additional analysis from EPA Region 5's Long Term Hydrologic Impact Analysis (LTHIA) model—allowing outputs from SGI to become inputs for LTHIA—a much desired collaboration.

Milwaukee, WI

The Menomonee Valley, a 1500 acre industrial area and brownfield is undergoing large-scale redevelopment spearheaded by the City of Milwaukee. The site provides a significant opportunity for urban manufacturing infill in an area that has felt significant development pressures on surrounding open space and farmland. SGI will be used to analyze the effects of various transportation options within the site. The Valley stakeholders, representing over 30 public, private, and non-profit organizations, will examine scenarios to assess how site improvements affect vehicle miles traveled, transportation access for the workforce, and air quality impacts.

Rice County, MN

Minnesota Planning, a state agency, runs a local planning assistance program designed to help counties with regional comprehensive planning efforts. Rice County, located near the Twin Cities metropolitan area is challenged by rapid growth along the Interstate 35 corridor that bisects the county. In Rice County, Minnesota Planning will work to establish urban growth boundaries and future land use directions for the cities of Northfield and Fairbault through a multi-jurisdictional, citizen-based process. Both cities, as part of the county's community-based comprehensive planning effort, must identify "urban growth boundaries" areas needed for projected development for the next 20 years. SGI will help citizens decide how and where they want to grow. These decisions will be reflected in the comprehensive plan, a draft of which is scheduled for completion this fall.

Region 6

San Antonio, TX

The Alamo Area Council of Governments, the City of San Antonio, the San Antonio Housing Authority, and the VIA Transit Authority are involved in the Mayor's initiative to encourage investment in the inner city and select target areas in which to concentrate revitalization efforts. As the city plans to provide housing renovation, commercial development assistance, and street repair to these selected areas, SGI will be used to examine the air quality benefits and water consumption rates associated with smart growth development practices.

St. Tammany Parish, LA

St. Tammany Parish is in the process of developing a ten-element, APA “Growing Smart” model Comprehensive Plan to manage growth throughout the parish. In developing the plan, the parish will examine a range of densities, development types (linear patterns, radial corridors, spread cities, and clusters), and transportation options. SGI will be used to visualize the impacts of these various land use and transportation scenarios during the comprehensive planning process.

Houston, TX

The Gulf Coast Institute (GCI), a non-profit organization serving as the principal leader of smart growth in Houston, will use the SGI as a bridge between community organizations and planning agencies in the Houston region. GCI is working with the City of Houston Planning Department to examine development codes for ways to reduce air emissions and is assisting with scenarios for a Master Plan for a 10-block area in a low-income neighborhood in the City's Third Ward. GCI will use the SGI, with assistance from the GIS Program Manager at Houston-Galveston Area Council and the Scarcella Science and Technology Center of the Houston Community College, to evaluate the redevelopment of the neighborhood with mixed use development and pedestrian-enhanced transit access to demonstrate the effect on vehicle miles of travel and air quality.

Region 7

Wildwood, MO

Located in the path of St. Louis' impending development, the City of Wildwood, has adopted a Master Plan and various development ordinances to advance compact and sustainable development. To assist in these efforts, SGI will be used to compare alternative park locations in terms of pedestrian access, vehicle miles traveled, land use mix, and open space needs. SGI will also be used to inform a pending decision on amending the Master Plan to shift two parcels that are zoned for suburban-area densities and designs to town-center level densities and designs.

Region 9

Clark County, NV

Under the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, more than 27,000 acres of Federal land located within Clark County, will be privatized by auction. In order to determine which properties to nominate for disposal, the county and affected city governments will use the SGI model to examine the impacts from alternative development scenarios and assist with potential re-zonings. The County's goal is to support developments that will provide environmental benefits through smart growth approaches.

Merced, CA

The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and EPA have formed the “Partnership for Integrated Planning”—a multi-agency approach for improving regional planning efforts through the integration of land use planning with

environmental and transportation planning. The steering committee has developed an extensive workplan detailing specific tasks. All of the stakeholders will participate in developing population and housing projections, land use and transportation scenarios, and impact evaluations that will ultimately lead to the selection of a preferred transportation system, financial and mitigation plan. SGI will be used as part of a compendium of tools to help MCAG and Caltrans evaluate the impacts of alternative transportation system scenarios.